The Central American Citizen Security Partnership

USAID photo

White House photo

DoS photo

"As the nations of Central America develop a new regional security strategy, the United States stands ready to do our part through a new partnership that puts the focus where it should be – on the security of citizens. And with regional and international partners, we'll make sure our support is not just well-intentioned, but is well-coordinated and well-spent."

– President Barack Obama

Central America – Citizen Safety Under Siege

The deteriorating security situation in Central America poses serious threats to the safety of its citizens. Traffickers operate in all seven Central American countries to smuggle drugs to the United States and other nations, while arms and cash flows move south from the United States to sustain these criminal organizations. The continued expansion of national and transnational gangs has created communities of fear, and rampant organized crime and corruption robs citizens of their trust in public officials and their ability to earn a livelihood.

A Collaborative Partnership To Support Central America

The United States has far-reaching geographic, economic, and demographic links to Central America. Assisting these nations in addressing the complex, transnational challenges they face is in our national security interest. During his March 2011 visit to El Salvador, President Obama launched the Central American Citizen Security Partnership to improve citizen safety by reducing the ability of criminal organizations to destabilize governments, threaten public safety, and spread illicit drugs, guns, and other transnational threats to Central America, its neighbors, and the United States. In partnership with regional governments, the Central American Integration System (SICA), and other donor nations and multilateral organizations participating in the Group of Friends of Central America, the U.S. government is supporting Central American governments, ensuring that donors coordinate their contributions for the most effective, high-impact use of funds, and developing more focused, accelerated, and coordinated assistance programs to keep citizens safer.

Priority Areas of The Central American Citizen Security Partnership

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region;
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America;
3. Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments;
4. Re-establish effective state presence, services and security in communities at risk; and
5. Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats.

CARSI – The Partnership's Implementation Mechanism

The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) is the primary U.S. implementation and funding structure for United States citizen security assistance to the region under the Central American Citizen Security Partnership. In the Northern Triangle countries – El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – CARSI efforts focus on establishing successful programs that will make short- to medium-term sustainable impacts to reduce levels of crime and violence and build the capacity of law enforcement and rule of law institutions. Programs include local crime prevention plans, services to youth who are at-risk of crime and violence, establishing model precincts and community policing efforts, and setting up border interdiction programs. In Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama, the United States supports host nation efforts to keep citizens safe and bolster the capabilities of their rule of law institutions. Through CARSI, the United States has committed more than $361 million in regional assistance since 2008.

For more information related to the Central America Regional Security Initiative, please visit our website at http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rt/carsi/index.htm